

# The C E A CRITIC

Formerly THE NEWS LETTER of the College English Association

Vol. XI—No. 4

Published Mineola, N. Y. Editorial Office, Brooklyn College, Brooklyn 10, N. Y.

April, 1949

## Annual Meeting

The Annual Meeting of the Association will be held at Stanford University, the evening of Sept. 6th, in the Education Auditorium. The program is being arranged and will be announced soon.

## Moral Uplift? Metrical Maze?

As a professor of English, I suppose that my own reactions to the teaching of poetry are typical. When the time comes in Freshman English for me to invoke the Muse, my eyes light up with a gleam otherwise absent. I gird up my loins and set out on a crusade against the powers of darkness. In a word, I love poetry, and I assume that we all do. I am, however, convinced that most of us either kill the thing we love or at the very least mangle it pretty badly. The average student, in high school or college, finding himself confronted with poetry, is either indifferent, or suspicious, or contemptuous. It is a difficult business to beguile him, to trap him, and to hog-tie him, a business that I wish were better understood. I have two main objections to the manner in which poetry is almost universally taught in the introductory courses of secondary school and colleges: it is taught as a series of neat, quotable expressions of noble thoughts; it is taught as metrics.

Under the Moral Uplift system, Longfellow ranks high. When I was a schoolboy, "Excelsior" was held up for my admiration, and I was made to feel that it was a very splendid thing indeed to gasp out my life somewhere above the timber line clutching an enigmatic banner. Similarly, I was told that the aesthetic effect of the sands of time would be improved by the addition of a set of my footprints. The conclusion of the matter in both cases was that the poem in question was a fine one, a conclusion with which I can no longer agree. In these two poems Longfellow may well be compared to the trumpet player in a Salvation Army band; his spiritual earnestness outruns his technical ability (lest I be misunderstood, I must add that I think Longfellow wrote many fine poems). A less objectionable variation of this system is the concentration on the thought content of a poem, which is often reduced to a prose

paraphrase. Certainly a student ought to be required to know what the poem is about, and certainly a paraphrase is a useful kind of theme, which can be graded for diction and all the other mechanics. The trouble is that far too many times the thought of the poem, or the idea lying behind the poem, is made synonymous with the poem itself. The student then comes to regard a poem as an elaborate way of saying something that the silly author might just as well have said simply and directly.

Under the Metrical Maze system, matters are even worse. To appeal again to my own school-boy experience, I can remember that when I was studying algebra, I learned to juggle formulae without having the remotest idea of what the letters were meant to stand for. The process was at times a game and at times a puzzle, but it was never an assimilation of the principles of mathematics. This is, I think, a close analogy to the process of metrical analysis. The student often becomes quite skillful in working out a hieroglyphic pattern, but the pattern exists as an entity independent of the poem. When an occasional student does bring the two things together in his mind, he is apt to think that they are identical, and he arrives by a different route at his familiar destination — a poem is something essentially simple that is arbitrarily complicated by a tangle of rhymes, inverted accents, hypermetrical syllables and other monstrosities. The poem becomes a diagram instead of a chime of bells. Again I must beg not to be misunderstood. I am not falling into the either-or fallacy. The problem is a matter of emphasis; of what to do first; of making poetry meaningful and delightful to the tyro. I should, for example, expect a college senior majoring in English to know all about the metrics of the various kinds of sonnets, but I should not care if the beginner did not know what a sonnet was, so long as he was somehow induced to enjoy reading a poem that happened to be a sonnet. Suppose you were trying to get an experienced listener to enjoy Beethoven's Fifth Symphony; would you begin by insisting that he memorize the fact that it was written in the key of C minor and in 2/4 time? Only if you were in desperate search of a specific question to ask on an examination, an unworthy motive

not unheard of in literary circles.

The musical illustration has brought me to my constructive suggestion. Let us not forget that poetry is essentially music; that it is an emotional experience in which the sound is a vital factor. The language of poetry is to use the jargon of semantics— affective language; but it does not and cannot affect us if it is merely seen and not heard. Let us remember that most students have never heard poetry in their lives, except for Mother Goose jingles. Moreover they cannot hear it by looking at the printed page any more than they can hear music by looking at the notes. It follows that they must begin to hear it in the classroom. Therefore the instructor must learn how to read it himself, and this art is not in the curriculum of any Ph D. mill or school of education. He cannot read poetry by the light of nature any more than he can play the violin. Once he has learned how to read well, he has a powerful classroom weapon. After a poem has been thoroughly discussed, let him read it to the class. He will get applause, which is gratifying but unimportant. The important fact is that the poem has come alive and has sunk deep. Ideally, perhaps, a poem should be memorized by the student and then recited, but only if the poem has been thoroughly mastered, and if the recitation is made something more than parrot-like. The student would then come to share to some extent in the process of artistic creation, and poetry would cease to be that repellent thing Art and would become pleasure.

Theodore H. Banks,  
Wesleyan University

## For the Love of Poetry

Supporting its belief that the good reading of good poetry deserves to be encouraged, the English Club of the Newark Colleges of Rutgers University recently conducted its eleventh annual poetry reading contest.

From forty high schools in northern New Jersey students came to Newark eager to read so as to give pleasure to others, eager to demonstrate the beauty to be found in the quietly intelligent reading of a good poem.

(N. E. Meeting, Page 4)

## The English Program and General Education

(Delivered more fully on October 30, 1948, at the organization meeting of the Southeastern Pennsylvania section of the COLLEGE ENGLISH ASSOCIATION)

What are the usual practices and responsibilities of our college English departments? What is "General Education"? How can teachers and departments of English adjust their work to the new curricula?

Some years ago Mr. Robert Spiller formulated for the National Council of Teachers of English the following statement of the functions of "an average department of English in a liberal-arts college":

1. To give to all students an ability to use their own language as a tool for writing, reading, and speaking in the ordinary pursuits of life
2. To give to any student in the college who may desire it, whether an English major or not, an experience in culture, self-discovery, or whatever other vague but legitimate objective may be served by an experience with an art on the part of a non-artist
3. To give to English majors a positive understanding of literary art and a knowledge of English or of English, American, and related literatures.

This generally acceptable statement suggests, first, the extreme difficulty of our task. If an English department could accomplish these hard things, and if other departments, under leadership as enlightened as ours, could reach their corresponding goals, we should have in our college something like "General Education" itself, if not the millennium.

Mr. Spiller's statement suggests further that the part of our work most directly related to "general culture" is likely to be somewhat vague in aim and methods and almost certainly elective or fortuitous in application. With these non-English-major students we are especially uncertain what we want to do, and many of them are not at all uncertain as to what they want to do with us.

These two considerations add up, I think, to the tentative conclusion that, within its field and in proportion to its success, the work of a representative Eng-

(Continued on Page 5)

# THE CEA CRITIC

Published at 70 Main Street,  
Mineola, N. Y.

## Editor

ROBERT T. FITZHUGH

## Editor Emeritus

BURGESS JOHNSON

## Associate Editor

J. GORDON EAKER, Jersey City  
Junior College, Jersey City, N. J.

Entered as second-class matter August  
11, 1948, at the post office, at Mineola;  
New York, under the Act of August 24,  
1912.

Published Monthly, September  
through May

COLLEGE ENGLISH  
ASSOCIATION

## Vice-President

ARTHUR K. DAVIS  
University of Virginia

## Vice-President

JOHN W. DODDS  
Stanford University

## Executive Secretary

ROBERT T. FITZHUGH  
Brooklyn College, Bklyn. 10, N. Y.

## Treasurer

WILLIAM A. OWENS  
Columbia University

(Official mail c/o College English  
Assn., Brooklyn College, Brooklyn  
10, N.Y.)

## DIRECTORS

(Term ends in Dec. of year named)

Herbert L. Creek, Purdue Univ. (1948)  
Howard Lowry, College of Wooster (1948)  
Ross Taylor, Univ. of Wichita (1948)  
E. K. Brown, Univ. of Chicago (1949)  
Henry S. Canby, Yale University (1949)  
S. M. Pitcher, State Univ. of Iowa (1949)  
T. M. Pearce, Univ. of New Mexico (1950)  
Mark Van Doren, Columbia Univ. (1950)  
Odell Shepard, Waterford, Conn. (1951)  
Gordon Keith Chalmers,  
Kenyon College (1951)

Membership in the College English  
Association \$2.00 a year, of which \$1.50  
is for subscription of the CEA CRITIC.  
Subscription for Libraries \$1.50.

## Other Voices

Although I attended the New  
England meeting from begin-  
ning to end, I came away not  
worn out but refreshed.

Mrs. Margaret W. French  
Lasell Junior College

The report of the New Eng-  
land meeting suggests that we in  
the Midwest need this sort of  
thing.

Donald B. Youel  
State Teachers College  
Mankato, Minn.

## GROUP MEETINGS

CEA meeting in Chicago, Ill.  
Inst. Tech., Sat., April 30. See  
March CRITIC.

Indiana CEA Meeting, Fri. and  
Sat., May 13, 14, Purdue, Lafay-  
ette, Ind.

Other territories open for ag-  
gressive agents. Editor.

## AYE AND NAY

I have enjoyed the CRITIC,  
particularly the discussion of the  
Ph. D. program and the recent  
criticism of T. S. Eliot. May I  
add my amen. The letter from  
the gentleman in Alabama, I  
believe, was perfectly absurd.

The CRITIC is the only pro-  
fessional paper I have ever seen

which seems to have its feet on  
the ground. The tone is candid  
and realistic. I read it from  
beginning to end and save it.  
Charles R. Boak  
State Teachers College  
Edinboro, Penna.

I pay my dues again with con-  
siderable reluctance. The reason  
is that I am shocked, yes, that's  
the word, by the silly editorial  
"Even, and Particularly, Mr.  
Eliot." If this sort of stuff  
represents anything like a  
"policy" of the CEA CRITIC,  
then it is time I bowed out.  
Whatever one may think of Mr.  
Eliot's political views, he is a  
great poet and a great critic  
whose influence on a whole  
writing generation is patent  
enough. Your editorial writer's  
synopsis of Mr. Eliot's critical  
method is a caricature. Surely,  
too, that last paragraph must  
have been taken from some  
other piece and attached here  
by mistake. It begins with the  
false assumption that Mr. Eliot's  
work is not concerned with  
moral values and ends with a  
plea for the study of the kind of  
literature which can please ev-  
eryone.

Willard Thorp  
Princeton University

No mistake. The editorial  
asks, "What is Mr. Eliot's place  
in the Democratic culture he has  
renounced, he, the apostle of  
those who distrust Democracy  
and the art which it nourishes  
and the education which must  
nourish it?" But all good writ-  
ing is moral—"indirectly moral"  
to use Theodore Spencer's phrase  
—"even, and particularly, Mr.  
Eliot's." The editorial does  
question whether Mr. Eliot's  
poetry, or his "values," or the  
critical method and interpreta-  
tion which his poetry seems to  
have inspired has much signifi-  
cance in publicly supported  
higher education, for all stu-  
dents, in all colleges. And in-  
directly the editorial wonders  
whether college English teach-  
ers, under the protection of a  
universal requirement, have suc-  
ceeded in making their new,  
vastly enlarged, public feel the  
humanizing values which they  
know are in their subject mat-  
ter. Is there a greater challenge  
before them? Editor

## JOHNSON AND NETHERCOT

Johnson's pungent article,  
"Heavens, He's Moral" deserved  
to be all on Page 1; and not  
simply because in my old age I  
begin to find myself, with con-  
siderable surprise, feeling that  
morals are a discussable sub-  
ject. Johnson seems to have the  
right (i.e., my) idea about litera-  
ture.

Nethercot's question as to  
tangible results from the  
CRITIC is natural, interesting,  
and not quite futile, since you  
may get one or two letters  
acknowledging definite debt to  
ideas gotten from it. It would  
be improbable if a thousand  
ideas sent to a thousand teachers  
should result in a million abso-  
lute duds. But education is not  
the simple stimulus-reaction  
process which Professor Nether-  
cot seems to be asking for; new  
methods come from minds pre-  
pared by much thought and  
varied reading; handing on the  
torch is too simple a metaphor.  
Of course good teaching depends  
on good teacher, but is the old  
assignment-recitation or lecture-  
examination method unimprov-  
able? Lastly there is the value  
of change itself; even if the new  
method is in itself no better for  
the student, it certainly is good  
for the teacher to approach his  
subject from a new angle.

Morse Allen  
Trinity College  
Hartford, Conn.

The "New Critics" have cer-  
tainly helped all of us to be  
better readers of poetry, and we  
are grateful. Yet many of us  
share Professor Reynolds' (Sept.  
'48 CRITIC) uncertainty that  
rhetorical analysis is enough.  
We are not willing to return to  
"pant and palpitation." We are  
not content to teach literature  
as a course in things in general  
... Incisive analyses of contem-  
porary poetics can lift the  
CRITIC far above the level of  
complaints about freshman com-  
position which so often seem to  
be the best that the mail brings  
to the editor.

Donald B. Youel

## CREDO

The last number of the CRITIC  
was interesting. Your incipient  
controversy with Hoepfner sug-  
gests that a certain amount of  
militancy and plain speaking is  
good journalism. I hope it will  
go on. Nethercot's letter really  
gets down to brass tacks, and I  
hope it will elicit replies. I agree  
with the latter to the extent of  
admitting that what I read and  
hear about English teaching  
makes little difference in my own  
ways and means. Whether it  
should be another matter. I'm  
afraid my own philosophy of  
teaching is pretty simple, amount-  
ing to something like the follow-  
ing:

(1) Have a good time in class  
and see that your students have  
one, too.

(2) Never hesitate to say that  
you like or dislike a book, but if  
you do be sure to show that your  
attitude is personal and not oracu-  
lar.

(3) If the pursuit of knowledge  
is exciting and adventurous (as  
it of course is), make your stu-  
dents feel that it is.

(4) Laugh a good deal.

(5) Aim all the time at "audi-  
ence participation."

(6) Eschew sarcasm.

(7) Give grave consideration  
to any opinion, if it seems hon-  
est.

(8) If a student needs to be  
slaughtered, let the class do it  
if possible.

(9) Treat your students as ad-  
ults, but young adults. Don't try  
to make them middle-aged before  
their time.

(10) Keep in mind all the time  
that literature is an aspect of  
life. Whenever possible draw  
contemporary comparisons.

There are a few dozen more of  
them.

Sincerely,

R. M. GAY

## Somewhere in Oklahoma

This is a late report to the  
CEA from its "Editor Emeritus"  
as he rambled from college to  
college making classroom visits,  
talking to writing groups and  
taking part in faculty "round ta-  
bles." Two recent experiences in  
particular might be of interest  
to your readers, and one of them  
should have been reported long  
ago, since it actually took place  
under the direction of one of the  
present CEA Board of Directors,  
and was in some degree an out-  
growth of CEA counsels.

In early January I attended a  
joint meeting of the State Uni-  
versity English teaching staff and  
the city high school English  
teachers in Albuquerque, New  
Mexico. This was not the first  
such get-together in that city,  
and evidently it will not be the  
last. The occasion was a Satur-  
day luncheon, notable for good  
food, good company and good  
fellowship. After lunch the  
group was addressed by your Di-  
rector, Dr. T. M. Pearce, Chair-  
man of the University English  
Department, by your Editor Em-  
eritus, and by Miss Barbara Phil-  
lips of the High School. Each in-  
formal talk was designed to stim-  
ulate discussion of the common  
objectives of college and high  
school English teaching, and ap-  
parently succeeded in doing so.  
Forty-three teachers were pres-  
ent, 13 from the High School and  
29 from the University, and one  
outlander.

The discussion which followed  
was practical and meaty, and  
drew out such widespread par-  
ticipation as to make the meet-  
ing distinctly worthwhile. Other  
such conferences will un-  
doubtedly follow.

Early in March I visited Texas  
Technological College, and was



# WOULD I

## Again?\*

By Elizabeth W. Manwaring,

Professor of English Composition, Emeritus

"The only wisdom we can hope to acquire  
Is the wisdom of humility . . ."

T. S. ELIOT, "East Coker"

My title and text require two lines of Mr. Eliot's context:

There is at best but a limited value to the  
knowledge derived from experience . . .  
Do not let me hear of the wisdom of old men,  
but rather of their folly . . .

My favorite line from E.A.R. is that sorrowful admission of  
Yseult of Brittany's aged father:

Wisdom was never learned at any knees.

Nevertheless will you listen with what tolerance you can muster to some reflections of age,—product of forty years' trying to teach Rhetoric and English Composition? Such are the names in the Wellesley Catalogue of my beginning assistanceship and ultimate professorship, in association with a minor in English Literature, and just once with English Language.

In the long winter evenings of 1947-1948 there was time for recollections and regrets, mingled with occasional complacencies. The time was less than I had expected, because committees and correspondence continue, I warn you, even into the Emeritus status. Those letters and callers who pampered complacency were pleasant; but there came at times the humbling thought that the appreciators were but an inconsiderable fraction of the thousands—yes, after forty years, they are appallingly thousands—who sat before me with seeming respect and took down something in notebooks—usually the wrong thing: the hasty side remark which was too ill-considered for such undesirable semi-permanence. There was even an appreciator—deriving from days of the shirt waist with detachable collar—who said with agreeable fervor, "You were our favorite teacher freshman year"—pause, while I looked receptive—"You always wore *clean* collars!"

There seems pitifully little surviving from the hours of advice, and from the tons of themes which cost so much labor to writers and reader. A few gratifying memories do break in, as of that mathematically inclined freshman whose erroneous ideas of style persisted until spring, when something, perhaps the freshly burgeoning leaves, inspired her to write at last an artless and sincere bit of her real self. To the commendation given she replied, face glowing, "Oh, you want me to write it the way I would say it!" She is now the valued secretary to one of our

most distinguished and busy university presidents, recognized by him as an invaluable helper. I think of other secretaries—one to a high railroad official, who helped me get a reservation for one of our administration when conditions of travel were at their worst; of a librarian in one of our chief colleges for women, who avowed that a two-hour course in narrative-writing in her junior year had been of particular use to her in her job; of teachers and scholars, not only in the field of English, in many a college and school; of journalists whose work has the honor of a by-line; of editors and professional writers of all sorts of publications, from cook-books and detective stories (one had an English professor for detective) to biographies, novels, poems and works of science. But a sense of failure comes over me in this second batch of long winter evenings on which I am entering when I read those over-numerous articles in professional journals, on what is wrong with the teaching of English. The sense of failure is deepened by my dearly-bought knowledge that none of the writers knows, or at least expresses half of what I know to be wrong with it; and there is only slight comfort in reminding myself that a great deal is wrong also with the teaching of some other subjects; perhaps even with one or two of the subjects themselves as too vaguely defined and too uncertain of value to hold such large place as they do in a liberal arts program.

Certainly, compared with Rhetoric they are parvenu. The liberal art of Rhetoric has an ancient and distinguished origin and a proud tradition. (Aristotle's valuable text-book would probably, if published today, receive the comment, "This text is on a new principle".) If Rhetoric goes back also to the sophists, at least Sophocles is its great exponent; and what teacher in Rome had higher honor than Quintilian? If Oxford and Cambridge, Harvard and Yale, have slighted and even condemned the art, and assumed that it was to be taught by a tutor in any subject, other great universities in our country hold it in esteem. The Scottish universities maintain it in high place; in the great tradition of Blair and Bain and Minto they have had for over half a century Sir Herbert Grierson. One of the most profitable textbooks which I have come upon is his *Rhetoric and English Composition*, published at Edinburgh in 1944. I quote as a valuable reminder of our main business his definition of the subject:

Rhetoric is the study of how to express oneself most correctly and effectively, having in mind the nature of the language used, the subject we are speaking or writing on, the kind of audience we have in view, and the purpose, which last is predominant.

\* A talk given at the meeting of the New England branch of the College English Association at Harvard University, November 27, 1948, at Old Seaver's Hall, in the room where Dean Briggs and Bliss Perry lectured.

No wonder, considering this clear jargonless definition, that Sir Herbert stresses the tradition of his teacher, Bain, in practicing much close analysis of prose passages. One of my greatest failures, I sadly realize, was expending far too little time on such analysis. It is a poor excuse that I had little or none of such practice in my own school and college days.

I shall make no bones of using the first personal pronoun, for, I trust, your benefit. An interview with Mr. Eliot in a recent *New York Times Book Review* quotes him as saying, "One of the pleasures of growing old is that you don't worry about dignity." Bearing in mind those discouragements to aged advisers quoted at the opening, I will recount some of my other grounds for humility, in the unconquerable hope that some few of you may profit by a bad example, if only you get it early.

Not until I was too old to eradicate ingrained habits without great pain, if at all, was I informed that I "er"-ed noticeably, talked too fast, and too often dropped my voice at sentence-ends. No one ever did tell me—I read it in the slightly glazed look of some of my front-seaters—that I talked too much. How I wish that I had oftener put in practice one of the wisest pedagogical counsels I ever received (it was from Albert S. Cook of Yale, well known for his Socratic questioning): "Don't tell the student. Get him to tell you. He will not remember what you tell him; he will remember what you induce him to tell you." That I do remember what Professor Cook told us is beside the point; he had touched one of the chief defects in the teaching of all too many of us. We not only lecture too much; we *prattle* to a too-readily appreciative (or seemingly appreciative) class, which slyly looks at its respective watches and notes that time for its own participation is passing. I have sometimes wished that talking was accompanied by a severe pain in the tongue.

Other humbling memories are of classes to which I went with no clear idea of the terminus I ought to arrive at, nor the spacing of midway points on the journey. The bell rang at what was clearly not a train stop, and the class straggled forth, gabbling on the threshold, "What did she say we have for next time?"

There are warnings in the nightmare switched to in the course of my career; and in contrast to certain advertisers, I will give both ends of the switch. In my first years of teaching I would dream intermittently for the week or two before the opening class that more or less confidently I began to lecture, and had said all I had prepared (and all I could improvise) in the first ten minutes. This nightmare is not peculiar to teachers of English; but the nightmare which occurred when I had been teaching for a decade or more is, I suspect, such as only a teacher of English (or maybe history or philosophy) could have. In this, the bell for the end of the class rang just as I was finishing my opening remarks. What is the meaning of a third form which coincided with my last two or three years of service? In this, the opening term had progressed to perhaps the third week, and I had been proceeding as usual. Suddenly, looking at my schedule card, I realized that there was one class I had never met at all. It was clearly time to retire.

In my last years of teaching I underwent the humbling experience of chairmanship. At least I tried to save from my own ills the younger members of our staff, enduring and causing them to endure, for the general good as well as for their own, a series of visits, a letter and a conference. Never had I a more distasteful job; but in the second year (for I carried it on to the second and in one instance to the third year) I almost always had the satisfaction of finding specific faults amended, new teaching habits started, heads up, voices firmer, and class looking relatively interested and participating more freely. And those who had not improved at least could not complain that they were unwarned of their non-reappointment (to use the stately term in vogue with us).

For that fate there are many reasons, of which it is hard to make the young M.A. or Ph.D. aware. Too many of them are ill-equipped in grammar, English or Latin; in knowledge of rhetorical terms and principles; in classical languages; in the history and earlier forms of English and other modern languages. For these reasons they are incompetent to deal wisely with students who bring to college as English linguistic baggage only the notions that a preposition is not a word to end a sentence with, and an infinitive must never, never be split. A stiff examination in Fowler's *Modern English Usage* might well be required of all beginning teachers of rhetoric. The lessening or entire omission from the life of students today of reading aloud

is far from compensated by frequent acting in second-, third-, and fourth-rate plays. Far too many of our young teachers are ill-equipped in voice, in enunciation, in pronunciation. And like most young Americans of the last twenty years they have suffered under a variety of jargons which blunt their standards of precision and elegance, and certainly of truth. Perhaps we may hope for eventual amelioration of some of these. Mr. Maverick's article on Gobbledygook is given in full in Rudolf Flesch's *Plain Talk*, which has much else that is good, though it is not to be swallowed whole. A book just published at Chapel Hill entitled *Federal Prose* is going to have another purchaser as soon as I can find time to order it, if this jewel is representative:

Under multiplicity of personnel assigned either concurrently or consecutively, to a single function, there results deterioration of quality in the resultant product as compared with the product of the labor of an exact sufficiency of personnel.

Do you get it? "Too many cooks spoil the broth." The active verb and concrete noun are in direr need of rescue today than when "Q" couched a lance against the Boy of woolly words. The current practice of the four-letter word such as brings books into court seems to me but another form of unfeeling jargon.

I have not named all the professional diseases which I fear I have illustrated in my own worst practice, as I have been aware of them in my colleagues. Substitution of "current events" and personal opinions on public questions for the business of rhetoric; lapses into personal anecdote instead of bearing down on sentence and paragraph structure; lack of clearness and failure to make sure that one is clear; dull or mannered vocabulary; self-dramatization, so pitifully easy on a platform. Perhaps the unforgivable sin is inadequate respect for the student as a person, which shows in contemptuous references behind their backs or face to face, but is less harmful so than in well-intentioned attempts to over-edit the student's written words instead of trying—a harder job, but more useful to the student—to find out what he means or almost means, and helping him to make it clear. Courtesy and generosity, patience except where there is genuine grounds for impatience with slack and insincere product; effort to speak clearly, agreeably, and with fullest respect for the Word, the expression of thought and feeling, which we have the privilege of helping the student to control—these are hard to keep in active practice day after tiring day. I have tried often to analyze the secret of the best teaching I ever knew. With one it was skilful questioning which woke the torpid mind; with another it was the brilliantly varied attack on each day's problem—unpredictable, stimulating, exciting; at very best it was having more expected of me than I felt I ever could accomplish; and the very expectation brought about the accomplishment. Always there is some indescribable personal factor. A well-known surgeon once told me of his experiences under some of the famous English teachers here at Harvard twenty-five years ago. He ran through the list, Greenough, Kittredge, Lowes; then he paused, and tried to find a precise word. "Ah," he said finally, "but Bliss Perry! He did something to a room when he came into it that none of the rest did."

I return to Mr. Eliot's *Quartets* for a statement of the ideal of us who are so often conscious of failure in our high function, but, let us hope,

... are only defeated  
Because we have gone on trying . . .  
And every phrase and sentence that is right  
(Where every word is at home . . .  
The word neither diffident nor ostentatious,  
An easy commerce of the old and the new,  
The common word exact without vulgarity,  
The formal word precise but not pedantic,  
The complete consort dancing together) . . .

Would I again? Though my failures a second time might be greater, and the fraction of the responsive among my students yet smaller; though I should have even less chance to teach the subject for which I was really best prepared and never did teach; though the obstacles set in the way of the teacher of rhetoric by committees of colleagues who think reading and writing come by nature were yet more discouraging; yes, I would.



invited to address the English Workshop, a group made up of English teachers in the college and the local high school. Lubbock, Texas, is a young city which has had a phenomenal growth; the population is now 70,000, and the schools are crowded to overflowing. The College is 23 years old, and already enrolls about 7000 students, a high percentage from the surrounding neighborhood. It is not necessary to tell English teachers that in such a situation there are difficult problems shared by college and high school alike.

The reason for this brief communication is not to report even briefly the substance of the remarks by prepared and impromptu speakers at these two meetings, but to urge that such friendly get-togethers take place more frequently, not only in urban colleges and universities, but in rural colleges, where English teachers at the high school level in all the surrounding area might attend. Such meetings should be a joint enterprise confined to those actually engaged in teaching, not brought together to listen to administrators. They should be highly informal, preeminently social, and encourage lively impromptu discussion.

—Burgess Johnson

#### PH.D.'S CAN TEACH

Please, dear Mr. Editor, some of us Ph. D's think that we can teach! We're not all stuffy old souls, who never cracked anything but a degree. Some of us, dear sir, have enough intelligence to learn how to teach, even if the university didn't instruct us. And some of us like people as well as books. In fact, there may be others, like me, who underwent the discipline of the degree during depression years only because it was then the only key to a college position. So please don't keep looking down your nose at all of us as stodgy old hat pegs. Soon you'll be making us all apologetic for our alphabetical suffixes.

One serious note. How about requiring these recalcitrant doctors of yours to teach for a few years in a high school before they undertake college work? They'll learn first principles there! And if they can't succeed in such a position, then let them go write books and not clutter up any part of the educational system.

Josephine E. Roberts  
Grove City College

N. E. Meeting, see page 4.

#### DEVICE

Does anyone have a working device for securing college-wide insistence upon use of acceptable English? Good usage should be the concern of teachers in all departments. Presumably they are all competent in the rudiments of grammar, spelling, and sentence structure, just as the English staff knows the multiplication table, three or four principal dates in American history, the composition of water, and what a syllogism is. (Or do I give too much credit all around?) Anyhow, concerted demand for simple accuracy and clarity might help both students and faculty.

Name Witheld by Request

The CRITIC has a "Read Me" look.

Harold Wentworth

#### Massacres the Season

Mr. Wilbur Dunkel (The CEA CRITIC, February) sounds somewhat like Vivien who left "Not even Lancelot brave nor Galahad clean."

He goes farthest astray with THE RESPECTFUL PROSTITUTE, somewhat wilfully stressing a very minor point and misunderstanding that. This is not a play "dealing with the problem of lynching" nor is it "confused" since it deals directly with the problem of the underprivileged—here negroes and prostitutes—who are submissive to the class that keeps them underprivileged, who are held in subjection because of their respect for the class which oppresses them, who long desperately to be respected, even noticed by those they abjectly recognize as their superiors, whose subordinate position is hopeless as long as they acquiesce in it. Mr. Dunkel has seen this play but not heard it.

Nor has he heard properly either EDWARD, MY SON or THE MADWOMAN OF CHAILLOT, both of which reward the reader and both of which are in print. The former will almost certainly be included in future classroom anthologies for it reads very well indeed and has in it qualities which lift it out of the class of plays made satisfying mainly by "superlative acting." It has a quality called by Robert Morley "a golden thread" which is a parent's very genuine love for his son, the universal desire of all parents to express that love in gifts, in making the world their children's "oyster".

And THE MADWOMAN OF CHAILLOT is a moving drama of the perennial struggle of good and evil. Here are the "insight,

#### I'VE BEEN READING

Members are invited to contribute reviews of books, old or new, which they wish to call to the attention of other English teachers. Professor J. Gordon Eaker, the Associate Editor, is in charge of I'VE BEEN READING. He is Head, Department of English, Jersey City Junior College, Jersey City, N. J.

Comments on reviews will be welcomed.

A Study of Literature for Readers and Critics by David Daiches, Ithaca, N. Y.: Cornell University Press, 1949, 233 pp. index, \$2.75.

Beginning with the question, "Why do you spend time reading and discussing books which tell of events which never in fact occurred?" and aiming his discussion, somewhat waveringly, at the "common reader," Mr. Daiches attempts to bring up to date the great classical answers: Aristotle's answer is no longer satisfactory, either to the critic or to the reader, since today we must consider the effects of widespread printing and, especially, a semi-literate reading public.

Mr. Daiches begins his search with an investigation of the literary use of language, as distinguished from that of philosophy or history or science, a use which makes its effect through "the time dimension" (i.e., plot) or through "counterpointing" (i.e., symbol). With such differentiation, he is ready to discuss fiction on one hand and poetry on the other. And on the basis of his fundamental discovery, that "literature" communicates unique insights in unique ways, he is also prepared to set up a hierarchy of values in literary works. He devotes some space to lower-grade but legitimate literary pleasures, showing that even from them the more carefully trained reader gets greater pleasure than does the semi-literate one. The sample analyses, although they stress English classics above the contemporary literature which he is helping us to find our way in, are helpful and interesting.

Chester H. Cable.  
Wayne University

and understanding of man's plight in the present situation" and all situations that Mr. Dunkel fails to find anywhere in the current season.

Louise Schutz Boas  
Wheaton College

#### Kenyon School

Despite the tragic fire, the Kenyon School of English will hold its second session this summer as announced. June 23 to August 6.

#### Ready this Spring MODERN MINDS An Anthology of Ideas

Edited by Howard Mumford Jones and Richard M. Ludwig, Harvard University, and Marvin B. Perry, Jr., The University of Virginia. 601 p. \$3.50

D. C. HEATH AND COMPANY

#### AMERICAN COLLEGE ENGLISH

A Handbook of  
Usage and Composition

Warfel, Mathews, Bushman

Part One: College Uses of English

Part Two: Handbook of Usage

Part Three: Principles of Composition

This text is outstanding because it

- ◆ deals with the skills required in all college work.
- ◆ offers a complete discussion of idioms and colloquialisms.
- ◆ contains a representative sampling of the best contemporary literature.

American Book Company

#### LITERATURE IN ENGLISH

H. K. Russell  
William Wells  
Donald A. Stauffer

This stimulating anthology combines in one volume selections from the best writing in both England and America. The chronological presentation provides excellent opportunity for the student to compare themes, styles, and ideas as they develop in the literature of the two countries. A special feature is the inclusion in complete form of King Lear and The School for Scandal. Following the text is a highly useful handbook defining literary terms, types, and periods.

1948 1174 pages \$5.50

HENRY HOLT and CO.  
257 Fourth Ave. New York 10

## BULLETIN BOARD

## WHO WHERE WHAT

Appointments: Sister M. Martin Barry, Associate Professor; Sarah Wingate Taylor, Assistant Professor; **Dominican College of San Rafael**; California.

Promotions: Francis R. Johnson, Professor; Yvor Winters, Professor; **Stanford University**.

Curriculum: **Dominican College of San Rafael**, California — New Courses: Modern Poetry, main emphasis on G. M. Hopkins and T. S. Eliot.

**University of Wyoming** — Experimental introduction to Language Course for freshmen in lieu of regular grammar-composition class.

**Tulsa University**—From Donald E. Hayden: "An experiment is the 'Tulsa University of the Air.' We are in on the NBC Theater program and the NBC Music program — one class on the air Saturday, the other Sunday. A half hour lecture by a member of the English department precedes the play—or the music—and two hours' credit is given in each course. The department also offers other courses over the University station KWGS-FM. These are broadcast direct from the classroom with regularly enrolled students as well as the radio audience. A course in Sociology, one in 'General Appreciation' and another in 'Music Appreciation' are also offered.

## Publications:

"**American Quarterly** will attempt to find the common area of interest in which specialists of various kinds and the aware reader may meet. It will publish articles, of a speculative, critical, and informative nature, which will assist in giving a sense of direction to studies in the culture of America, past and present. Contributors, academic or non-academic, will write for the lay reader who wishes to avoid the thinness of much popularization and the excesses of ingrown specialization. The first issue presents various aspects of American world influences. The second issue, to appear in June, will present articles that treat some of the principles of naturalism and the way they inform art, literature, and the movies." Published by Univ. of Minnesota, Exec. Editor, William Van O'Connor; Board: Merle Curtis, Laurence Schmeckbeier, Herbert Schneider, Henry Nash Smith, Paul S. Taylor, Rupert Vance. Vol. 1, No. 1 now out, and a good one it is.

## New England Meeting

University of Massachusetts, Amherst, Massachusetts, May 7, 1949.

9:30-10:00: Registration, Room D, Old Chapel.

10:00-12:15: Session 1. Auditorium, Old Chapel.

Chairman: Howard R. Patch, Smith College.

Greetings: Ralph A. Van Meter, President, University of Massachusetts.

Walter L. Simmons, Rhode Island State College, President, New England Region, College English Association.

Discussion: Rene Wellek, Yale University.

**The Impasse of Literature History.**

Ernest Bernbaum, Jaffrey, New Hampshire.

**What Does the Nature of Literature Require of Its Interpreters?**

Frederick S. Troy, University of Massachusetts, discussion leader.

Anna J. Mill, Mount Holyoke College, discussion leader.

12:45-2:00: Luncheon, Cafeteria, Butterfield Hall.

Chairman: Frank Prentice Rand, University of Massachusetts.

Speakers: Reginald T. Cook, Middlebury College.

## American Literature and the Humanities.

Wilbert Snow, Wesleyan University.

## Of Modern Poetry.

2:30-3:45: Session II. Auditorium, Jones Library.

Chairman: Stanley T. Williams, Yale University.

Discussion: George F. Whicher, Amherst College.

**A Course in Problems in American Civilization.**

Lloyd Haberly, University of Massachusetts Fort Devens, discussion leader.

3:45-5:00: Session III. Auditorium, Jones Library.

Chairman: Warren Smith, Rhode Island State College.

Discussion: Kenneth Burke, Bennington College, and the Institute for Advanced Studies.

**Critical Theory and Teaching Practice.**

George Armour Craig, Amherst College, discussion leader.

5:00-5:45: Literary Tour of Amherst.

6:00-7:00: Dinner, informal Lord Jeffery Inn.

7:30-8:30: Meeting. Auditorium, Jones Library.

Chairman: Roswell G. Ham, President, Mount Holyoke College.

## APPOINTMENT BUREAU

The services of the Bureau are available to C. E. A. members only. Annual registration fee is \$3.00. Address—College English Association, Brooklyn College, Brooklyn 10, New York. Telephone—Gedney-4-6379.

## SOME SEPTEMBER OPENINGS:

Location	Rank	Requirements	Salary
1. Indiana (church col.)	Inst. (M. or W.)	Ph. D.	c. \$3500
2. Calif. (church col.)	Open (M.)	Ph. D.	\$3000-\$4500
3. Maine (tech)	Inst. (M.)		\$2900
4. New York (teachers col.)	Inst. M. or W.)	M. A.	\$3000-\$3900
5. Illinois	Assoc. Prof. (M.),	Ph. D. + pubs.	Open
7. Pennsylvania	Inst. (M.)		Open
8. Indiana	Temporary, 1 yr. (M. or W.)	Recog. in field	Open
	Inst. (M. or W.)	+ Ph. D. + pubs.	\$3000-\$3500

Members interested in any of these openings may have further information about them by registering with the Bureau. Please refer to the position by the number used in the listing above.

## BUREAU IN CALIFORNIA

On September 6, 7, 8, and 9, the Appointment Bureau will maintain offices in Rooms 54 and 55, Stanford University. Both rooms are only a few steps from the registration desk for MLA members, and they will be most conveniently located for those who wish to make use of the Bureau. Please pass the word.

## Sections Three and Five

In this class, I am one who loves to teach:  
We read, we write, we feed, we fight, we score;  
We think of things we never thought before.

In that class, I am only known as teacher,  
Which is, for most, equivalent to preacher,  
And preacher is equivalent to bore.

What makes a class? Teachers will never reach  
The springs that make an eachness out of each.

Marcia Lee Anderson  
Hollins College, Va.

Speakers: Mary Eleanor Prentiss, Wellesley College.

**Elizabeth W. Manwaring.**  
Elizabeth Drew, Smith College.

**Theodore Spencer.**

Karl Shapiro, Johns Hopkins University.

**The Poet in the Theatre.**

Among the discussion participants will be: Sydney R. MacLean, Mount Holyoke College.

E. George Mason, Williams College.

Robert M. Mattuck, Goddard College.

Kenneth O. Myrick, Tufts College.

All teachers of college English whether members of C.E.A. or not, are invited. Registration fee, \$1.00. All who intend to stay overnight in Amherst, and who have no accommodations, should get in touch at once with Mr. Robert Lane, Old Chapel, Univ. of Mass., Amherst, Mass.

## Colgate Workshop

An English Workshop for high school teachers will be included in the 1949 Colgate University Summer Session, July 5-August 13.

Emphasis will be placed on practical solutions of classroom problems of materials and methods; elective courses for the fourth high school year; the integrated teaching of writing and speaking; the relationship of English to other departments and the use of contemporary media of mass communication.

For further information, write to Strang Lawson, Professor of English, Colgate University, Hamilton, New York.

## WRITERS OF THE WESTERN WORLD

edited by  
Addison Hibbard

Distinguishing features of this anthology are:

● The adequate representation of leading writers.

● The classification of the selections according to literary temper rather than chronologically or by type. By this arrangement, the unity of all the arts is emphasized, through the association of literature with painting, sculpture, architecture, and music within each temper.

xxix 1261 pp. Illus. \$6.00

Houghton Mifflin Co.



## Problems in Reading and Writing

By Henry W. Sams  
and Waldo F. McNeir  
University of Chicago

The "themes" idea in composition courses is carried to its logical conclusion in this provocative book. Each of the fourteen groups of readings is concerned with a particular subject and contains several pertinent selections exemplifying forms of discourse and structural patterns of organization. The student must analyze the organization of each reading in order to plan his own theme, thus becoming aware of the structure and subject in writing.

Published 1949

672 pages 5 5/8" x 8 3/8"

Send for your copy today!

**Prentice-Hall, Inc.**  
70 Fifth Avenue, New York 11

## COLLEGE COMPOSITION

A NEW THIRD EDITION

by Thorpe and Wells

For teaching good rhetoric  
not today's newspapers

Price, \$3.00

**HARPER & BROTHERS**  
49 East 33rd St., N. Y. C. 16

## BRIGGS Language — Man — Society

READINGS IN COMMUNICATION

A pertinent and brilliant selection of readings, ranging in style from articles on semantics and media of communication to an essay on esthetics and a poem by E. B. White. The abundance of fresh material from professional, academic, and literary writing provides the student with a perceptive view of language and the interaction of ideas in social relations.

Harold E. Briggs is Associate Professor of English Language and Literature, University of Southern California.

READY IN MAY  
PROB. 736 PP., \$3.50

**Rinehart & Company, Inc.**  
233 MADISON AVENUE - NEW YORK 16, N. Y.

(Continued from Page 1)  
lish department is General Education, but General Education not generally applied.

My first suggestion most good English departments are tough enough not to need: we should not too hastily assume the necessity of radical alteration in an already sound English program. General Education does not permit, much less does it require, the abandoning of our traditional aims. It does require, I think, the consolidation of the academic forces that make for a full humanity. Ours are the basic utility (English communication) and much of the basic tradition (the part of the Western tradition nearest home—the essential outlet to the larger stream.) What, then, is this General Education, of which we are a part but not the whole?

Apparently nobody knows. There is much descriptive statement, of course, but no generally acceptable definition. Some months ago a little book entitled TOWARD GENERAL EDUCATION attempted an omnibus definition which rounded off its cultural, moral, intellectual, and aesthetic aspects with the statement that General Education "encourages the proper practices of eating, sleeping, thinking, and playing . . ." Now it may be rather startling to be told that eating and sleeping are proper practices (have we not served them all along, unconscious of our pedagogic virtues?), but makers of philosophical definitions are (here and usually) more to be pitied than reproved. It is almost always so much easier to name the destination than to define the vehicle.

The same authors aver that "liberal arts colleges have been so preoccupied with the training of psychologists, chemists, and musicians, that they have neglected the education of the free man." With salutations to Milton and Montaigne, they seek to redirect attention to "humane values" by substituting the word "general" for the word "liberal." (Mr. Conant writes divertingly on the same alteration of terms: General Education is for "a multitude"; its name is more acceptable than "liberal education" to the common ear; if the study had concerned only Harvard College, GENERAL EDUCATION IN A FREE SOCIETY might well have been called "The Objectives of Liberal Education.") The tendency toward isolated specialism is present, of course, and strong. But the more an old and respectable college adds vocational courses, the more it is likely to insist on being called a "liberal arts" college. There is something very touching

about this worship of the Unknown God. And the counter-movement, if it only invokes the right divinities, may go far to counterbalance if not to correct our bent toward the wrong kind of vocationalism.

Some moths ago, in a report on "Current Trends in Higher Education" (NEA) Mr. Hoyt Trowbridge characterized General Education as "the part of higher education which is considered to be useful and necessary for all . . . contrasted with the special training intended to prepare students for particular occupations. Its subject matter is the basic arts and sciences, and it pursues the traditional aims of the liberal college . . ." The report continued with a description of "four patterns of General Education" which have developed in our colleges: the "distributional" pattern (familiar in conventional "degree requirements"); the "remedial conception" (sub-college work for the ill-prepared); the "practical conception" (as in the General College of the University of Minnesota); and the "theoretical or cultural conception," as at Columbia, Chicago, and St. John's.

It is this fourth conception which has given us courses such as "Contemporary Civilization," "Great Books," "The Nature of the World and of Man"—inter-departmental, non-elective, conducted largely in discussion groups, and based upon the study of a large number of the greatest examples of literary, political, and scientific achievement. Scientists, especially, seem sceptical about the effectiveness of this "cultural" plan; and almost everybody else asks, "Can the teachers do it? Can the students stand it?"

The introductory definition of General Education in the famous Harvard report (*General Education in a Free Society*) is similar to that of Mr. Trowbridge, and seems to me unexceptionable; but two of its qualifying additions make me vaguely unhappy. From a certain point of view, says the report, "the aim of general education . . . is to provide a broad critical sense by which to recognize competence in any field"; and elsewhere: General Education is distinguished from special education "not by subject matter, but in terms of method and outlook." I should think it very unfortunate to make deliberate use of cultural courses for the purpose of developing any kind of critical competence whatsoever. As Woodrow Wilson thought of moral character, a critical sense is important, but it is a by-product of certain kinds of experience; to seek it directly is

to debase the very experience which might otherwise produce it. Education in wisdom and morals need not be a random adventure, but it cannot be a closely controlled experiment. Likewise, while method and outlook will certainly vary as we pass from general to special education, subject matter will sometimes vary too, and vary widely. Objects and books well worth studying for special purposes would often be third-rate, or worse, for General Education in the humanities. Not all things are equally worth teaching; and I see no reason why General Education should settle for less than the best.

The Harvard course called "Great Texts of Literature" aims, according to the report, at "the fullest understanding of the work read rather than of men or periods represented, craftsmanship evinced, historic or literary development shown, or anything else." This seems to me the right approach not only to general courses in the humanities but also to most of our undergraduate courses in English and American literature; and it contains, in effect, my first suggestion to our departments of English. Invoking the protection of Benedetto Croce, Mr. Spingarn, and Mr. Cleanth Brooks, I submit that we should first make sure that we are really teaching literature, the work of art for its own sake, rather than dealing in biography, social backgrounds, literary categories, or philological fragmentation. Good teachers use these latter things where they are needed; but I suspect that others still dispense literary history, either because they think this is literature or because they think it more convincingly teachable than literature itself. In this latter notion especially, I like to think them wrong. In some classrooms the main action is a sort of duel between the professor and a monster with some twenty-five or fifty sophomore heads, with a passage of Keats flung down between them like a gage of battle; in others it is a fifty-two-minute bout between the Grand Old Man and the Good Grey Poet, with the class safely stowed in the ring-side seats. But if ever a great work of literature and even a third-rate teacher really team up (with the teacher as the junior member of the team, as he ought to be), the class may be in for a very different experience. Great Ajax with his spear and shield and Little Brother Teukros with his bow and arrow (ducking in and out to shoot and hide) were a terrific team. And it made astonishingly little difference that Teukros was a bastard.

Let us be sure that we are not refusing the aid of our ablest collaborators—the books we teach; and that when we use our historical scholarship we provide our work of art with a context and not a cortex.

My second suggestion is that we prayerfully try to make sure that our courses include only the works we really ought to teach, and none of those that need no teaching or deserve none. Organization is a grand thing, but the passion for symmetry and schematic completeness is a dangerous thing. It is natural to emphasize historically important writings, comfortable to stress your graduate-school speciality, consoling to realize that you have really "covered" Philip Freneau, and gratifying to know that you have ticked off every perceptible author of the period without missing a down-beat. But I think that we might well forego these satisfactions and agree to use our pitifully short time on those works the power and beauty of which have convinced us that our students (and we) really need them. And I look to the day when we may willingly include among the proudest products of our departments not merely the happy few who went to graduate school and delighted their new masters with the news that as undergraduates (under us) they had actually read all of **Clarissa Harlowe**.

As to first-year composition, the Harvard idea seems to me as excellent as it is obvious: the elimination of English A (as a course) and the basing of work in composition on the subject-matter of the first-year general course. The masses of heavy and significant reading with which students have been confronted in courses such as "Contemporary Civilization" and "Great Books" have aroused great interest, not unattended with groaning and gnashing of teeth. This seems to me an ideal situation for the practice of composition. I have no faith in the theory that students are especially likely to write well on familiar matters, because they are spared the pains of finding something to say and thus permitted to concentrate on expression. The saying and the thing said are not that easily separable. I should think that the necessity of writing about one's readings would greatly stimulate the effort to read with comprehension, and that having something to say (since expression can't exist *in vacuo*) might greatly improve the effect of one's writing. At least students might be rid of the idea that what they are trying to write is "Correct English."

The extensive and difficult readings in the new courses suggest one way in which English departments may supplement, if not correct, the practice of General Education. The attitude of any effective reader to prehistory, not repulsive; some of the children really reach for the Great Books and grapple them to their souls with whatever adhesive services they can manage; but for intensive and closely analytical reading there is, in these courses, simply no time. Here is an opportunity—though no new one. I would suggest—perhaps unnecessarily—that English teachers might well give renewed consideration to the aesthetic and disciplinary value of very close and analytical reading—the kind of reading which Mr. Cleanth Brooks and others have carried to such interesting extremes. It seems impossible to experience the full artistic impact of a great work without some such prolonged and close encounter; and it may be that in this kind of reading, and in the kind of composition I have mentioned, our students may find a discipline analogous to that of the lost art of classical translation.

My next suggestion is that we should seek to compensate as tactfully as we can the fallacy of the Common Cultural Denominator. There is quite possibly a tendency in General Education (as practised) to reduce literary works to their resemblances and students to those which are held to be their common qualities. I respect the "common core," but I fear an illegitimate leveling tendency; and I should like to regard our departments of English as special champions of an enlightened doctrine of individual differences. As Mr. Ransom says, a work of art is not a scientific generalization but a thing of infinite particularity. The same may be true of men—even undergraduates. And this implies a responsibility to identify and salvage the few best minds among our supplicants. Let us amend General Jacksonianism with a bit of Particular Jeffersonianism: it's all in the democratic family, and there should be no quarrel.

We should also seek to adjust a possibly excessive emphasis, in the theory of General Education, upon intellectualism, the critical faculty, and the history of ideas. The humanities, says the Harvard report, "appraise, judge, and criticize"; General Education seeks the abilities "to think effectively, to communicate thought, to make relevant judgments, to discriminate among values." None of these concatenated phrases says that one of our objectives is to cause

a student to have a certain experience; what all these formulae omit is experience itself. It is as if I should be invited to embark upon a desert-island experience with the latest glamour girl solely for the purpose of being wiser when I got home. We have to do with teaching works of art, and our students are somewhat more than critical instruments whose powers we are to train and sharpen against some future intellectual emergency.

General Education needs also (and assists) the work we can do in teaching creative writing and contemporary literature. Modern writings seem to be little used in the new courses, except perhaps as materials of social history, but our teaching of contemporary authors may be greatly helped by those general courses which are spreading, however thinly, a knowledge of the older authors and cultures. It may be that for the comprehension of the more difficult modern writers, notably the poets, a little knowledge of ancient and mediaeval works may be of more assistance to our students than all the courses we teach in English literature from Shakespeare to T. S. Eliot. As for creative writing—while we may rescue few otherwise mute, inglorious Miltons from oblivion, there is surely an important relationship between appreciation and even abortive creation; and once in a while we may find our man of parts.

My final suggestion is that the developing program of General Education may be in very great need of an imaginative conception of human history. President Chalmers of Kenyon College has given us an eloquent statement of the necessary corrective in the CEA Chapbook "Poetry and General Education." It has become increasingly clear that cultural or social history is the dominant theme if not the central discipline of General Education. Says President Conant, "Cultural history is the core of the core of general education." Says President Chalmers, "Either the understanding of ourselves is a constant and lively and ever-renewed obligation of reasonable men or it is not. If it is our obligation, the humanist is something far different from a transmitter of the past, and the subject of his studies is something far subtler and more profound than societies; it is nothing less than a human being."

Surely it is no debasement of the Muse of History to suggest that the arts and humane letters are not her handmaidens. Let us speak up for these other worthy ladies.—Francis C. Mason, Gettysburg College

## STUDIES IN THE SHORT STORY

By Adrian Jaffe & Virgil Scott  
Michigan State College

A new collection of 22 stories, definitely aimed at freshmen—whether in composition or introduction to literature courses. The authors' apparatus ("the best I've ever seen" says our adviser) consists of introductions, critical analyses (very complete for 1/3 of the stories), interpretations, and leading study questions.

Preliminary examination copies  
ready late April  
Write For One!



WILLIAM SLOANE  
ASSOCIATES

119 West 57th St., N. Y. 19

## The American College Dictionary

Text Edition

— New —

in content, philosophy, and form.

Price \$5.00

with thumb index, \$6.00

HARPER & BROTHERS

49 East 33rd St., N. Y. C. 16

## Readings For Today

By E. P. LAWRENCE  
and

HERBERT WEISINGER

both of Michigan State College

**F**ORTY prose selections for freshmen English classes, chosen as representative of the great tradition of humane ideas. Though chiefly contemporary, significant writings from the past are included. All kinds and methods of exposition in terms of sound writing craftsmanship are presented.

644 pages, \$3.25

THE RONALD PRESS COMPANY  
15 E 26th St. New York 10 N Y



cott

ries,

in-

ses.

the

our

luc-

very

s).

ing

pies

19

rm.

16

lege

for

ses,

of

ane

em-

rom

nds

in

fts-

NY

Y